



MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN TASK FORCE

MEETING NOTES

NOVEMBER 4, 2003

4:00 P.M.

ROOM 113

Task Force Members Present	Kit Boesch, Nye Bond, Susan Dunn, Duane Eitel, Margaret Hall, Elaine Hammer, Rick Krueger, Marian Malone, Bill McCoy, Eric Miller, Patte Newman, Oscar Pohirieth, Gordon Scholz, Terry Werner. (Greg MacLean and Tad McDowell absent)
Resource Panel Members Present	Mike Brienzo, Terry Genrich, Randy Hoskins, Sandy Strickland, Larry Worth
Others Present	Allan Abbott, Roger Figard, Joe Kern, Brian McCollom, Brian Praeuner, Alan Wickman, Marvin Krout, Kent Morgan, Duncan Ross, David Cary, Michele Abendroth

Agenda Topics

1. Call Meeting to Order

Mr. Morgan called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. and welcomed those present.

2. Distribution of Materials

Mr. Morgan reviewed the materials which were distributed at the meeting including a copy of the presentation entitled *Analysis of Conditions and Trends* which will be made today by SRF; Mr. Wickman's questions asked of Mr. Worth and Mr. Hoskins; a report entitled *Cities, regions, and the decline of transport costs*; and a report entitled *Travel and Environmental Implications of School Siting*.

3. Public Comment Period (10 Min. Maximum)

There were no public comments.

4. Analysis of Conditions and Trends - Joe Kern and Brian McCollum

Mr. Morgan introduced Joe Kern and Brian McCollom of SRF Consulting. Mr. Kern stated that the intent of the presentation is to offer their interpretation of the data. He noted that the data being presented will be compiled into a final report.

Mr. Kern began the PowerPoint presentation by stating that they started the process by establishing a baseline. He stressed that the data is what it is, and they are not criticizing any of

the past decisions that have been made. The job at hand is to look at the whole system and review the patterns.

Mr. Kern reviewed some general statistics about Lincoln and Lancaster County. He noted that urban growth since 1950 has been steady to the south and east. The current population is approximately 225,000 for the City and 250,000 for the County. Population projections to year 2050 are 500,000 in the County, which is double the current population. If we stay on the current trend with land area in relation to population, we will need 150 square miles of land to accommodate the population of 500,000. Population density is high in the core areas but low on the edges.

The number of persons employed in relation to the population is at a very good level.

In terms of commuter travel, 81% drive alone, 10% carpool, 1% ride the bus, 3% walk, 2% are in the “other” category, and 3% work at home.

There has been an increase of 60% in the number of vehicles over the past 20 years.

In 2025, the projection is to increase almost 80% in the estimated daily vehicle miles traveled, so they believe there will be more pressure on the roadways for travel.

The level of auto occupancy has steadily declined over the past 25 years.

In 1990, there were 572 miles of unclassified roads, which consists of freeways, arterials, and collectors, and a total of 250 miles of unclassified roads, which is local streets. Currently, there are 857 miles of unclassified roads and 388 miles of classified roads. In the future, they would expect to see a little bump in the classified roads to correspond to the Beltway Expansion, and a significant expansion in the local miles because the area is growing in the peripheral areas.

In terms of congestion, overall there is not a serious problem with congestion. There are but a few intersections that have significant congestion problems. This can present a challenge in marketing transit ridership because traffic congestion can be used as a reason to ride the bus.

Downtown parking spaces have increased steadily, with total parking spaces in 2000 of 22,423. The City has responded well to parking needs. Parking management can be a related factor to transit as it can be hard to convince a person to ride the bus when they have easily accessible parking.

In terms of commuting to work, almost 8,000 people work outside of the County; there are 3,500 daily work trips from Lincoln to Omaha; 15,000 workers come into Lancaster County daily; and there are 2,600 daily work trips from Omaha to Lincoln. Eighty-nine percent of the population is within 1/4 mile of transit, and 88% of employees are within 1/4 mile of transit.

Transit ridership has been fairly steady since the mid-1990's. A large percentage of transit users is from the University of Nebraska.

Mr. Kern then reviewed the core transit service areas. The highest density in the lower income areas is almost half of the land area. This is the best area to concentrate on in terms of transit. There are 30-40 miles where we have to be more creative with transit. The youth population is heavy in the core, but there are some other pockets in the community. The senior population is a little more scattered and is in the periphery in some cases. The greatest concentration of renters is in the core area. Mr. Kern identified the best and worst performing transit routes. He concluded that the most challenging routes are some of the ones that area outside the core area.

In terms of bicycling, the trail system is very strong. There are 90+ miles of trails, numerous grade separations, and plans for expansion. The weaknesses are that it is highly radial, they do not reach downtown, and the paths are only 10 feet wide. Also, the trail network should be complemented with lanes and collector streets.

With respect to walking, their findings show that there are sidewalks on both sides of nearly every street, there is an interconnected street system, and there may be long distances to most destination.

Land use is low to moderate density. There are few mixed- or multi-use nodes that are dense, diverse and walkable, which are characteristics supportive of transit. Commercial and multi-family housing areas are not suited for transit, bicycling or walking.

Brian McCollum reviewed the peer group analysis. He reiterated the fact that a peer group is a set of similar cities, not identical cities. The criteria used to select the cities were population, land area, population density, the state capitol, and having a major university. He then identified the list of peer cities which were used for the analysis and included Lexington, Eugene, Salem, Madison, Anchorage, Omaha, Lubbock, Des Moines, Fort Collins, Wichita, Lansing, and Topeka. Mr. McCollum then identified the conclusions of the comparisons, as follows:

- Average vehicle miles traveled per capita is low
- Daily vehicle miles traveled per roadway mile is low
- Above average freeway/arterial miles per square mile
- Well above average roadway miles per square mile
- Bus ridership is low per capita
- Bus service provided is low per capita
- Number of passengers per revenue hour is low
- Bus operating cost per revenue hour is low
- Demand response passenger productivity is average
- Demand response operating cost is high
- State funding for the transit system is low
- Local contribution is high

Mr. Kern noted that they looked at two of the City's documents that help guide transportation issues. Their assessment of the Comprehensive Plan is that there are few projects that support alternative transportation policies. The trend is that the recent patterns will continue. There are opportunities created by growth. From the Long-Range Transportation Plan, there are challenges, but also opportunities.

In summary, Mr. Kern noted that the City is adding 30+ square miles for every 100,000 in population. By 2050, the City will be 150 square miles and have a population of 475,000. Total County population will be 525,000. In terms of auto travel, driving alone is the overwhelming choice for commuters; auto travel has grown at a tremendous pace in Lincoln over the past 20 years; there are modest levels of traffic congestion; roadways are expected to increase to

accommodate growth; and the City appears committed to providing parking as needed. Transit travel coverage of land area is very high, service frequency and hours of operation is limited, and dependence on local funds is quite high. The trail system is very strong, but is seen as recreation with poor downtown connections. Land use patterns changed significantly in the 1970s. The Comp Plan has good policies for a base, but the market has not been very supportive.

Mr. Kern concluded by stating that the next steps are to determine where we want to go, use the baseline to develop alternative future scenarios, and evaluate the steps needed to attain the future vision. He then opened the floor up to questions.

5. Task Force Discussion

Mr. Bond asked why transit ridership is higher in some of the peer cities. Mr. McCollum stated that it is partly because of their involvement with their university and the extended hours of operation. Parking is also much more restricted at their universities.

Ms. Boesch asked if they looked at rural transit. Mr. Kern stated that they focused primarily on the City, because it is the largest portion of the study area.

Ms. Dunn asked if they studied the economic impact of our City policies. Mr. Kern stated that they have not gotten to that level yet.

Mr. Scholz asked the consultants if they will look at other forms of transit that will not involve changes in land use or if they will look at changing densities. Mr. Kern responded that it will probably be the latter, although that has yet to be determined.

Mr. Miller asked if the top-rating peer cities have commuter rail service. Mr. McCollum replied that they do not.

Mr. Bond stated that it would be helpful to have a vision statement to either reaffirm the current patterns or move toward change. Mr. Werner stated that he agrees with Mr. Bond. He believes that the City is not going in a good direction, in terms of the quality of life, energy use, and sprawl issues. He added that he feels that next step should be to develop a vision statement which must coincide with the Comprehensive Plan.

Ms. Hammer asked if there are other pieces of the multi-modal system in the peer cities. Mr. Kern stated that there is heavy bicycle use in Madison as commuter travel. Mr. McCollum stated that he did not have further information at hand, but could provide it.

Ms. Boesch asked if we offer the business community an incentive to use the bus. Mr. Worth responded that they contact businesses and tell them about the federal incentive and encourage them to participate in the program.

Mr. Krueger stated that he believes there is no indication that we will increase the density of the built environment. He also sees no indication in the private or political sector to create nodes of density. He does not believe that auto occupancy or use of public transit will change. Mr. McCollum stated that the trend overall can be low density, but that doesn't mean there aren't certain segments of the population who embrace density. Mr. Kern added that in the next 50 years, the population will increase by at least 200,000, and questioned if everyone will want the current pattern or have new choices available. Mr. Krueger commented that he sees a trend in downsizing zoning and does not believe that will change.

Ms. Malone stated that she believes that we should take into consideration the minority

population who rely on the bus system.

Ms. Newman stated that she believes there are a lot of opportunities to make things better.

Mr. Pohirieth stated that he believes we need to challenge the status quo. He asked the members of the Task Force what their feeling are on personal rapid transit. Mr. Werner stated that he believes there is some merit, particularly an economic benefit. He added that he has arranged a meeting with several entities to talk about this alternative. Mr. Krueger stated that he does not believe this system would work. Ms. Dunn stated that although it has merit in the right place, it probably would not work in Lincoln, except possibly in certain localized situations.

Ms. Newman asked what things stood out in comparison to our peer cities. Mr. Kern stated that they have not yet begun their discussions at looking at all the options. At first glance, the university component is a concern. Trails and sidewalks are pretty good. Mr. McCollum noted that the limited bus operation hours is a concern.

Mr. Krueger stated that he has always been intrigued with limiting the service areas but providing better service to those areas. Mr. McCollum replied that although a route may not be highly used, if you are the one person using that route, you would say that it is highly used.

6. Other Business

There was no "Other Business" discussed.

7. Adjourn

Mr. Morgan adjourned the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

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